

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A rubber access mat, comprising:

a flexible rubber slab made from recycled vehicular tires, the slab having a top face and a bottom face defining a thickness of 3 [[or 4]] inches, opposed side edges defining a width and opposed end edges defining a length;

a first rigidifying grid of reinforcing steel wire embedded within the rubber slab spaced between the top face and the bottom face and consisting of a plurality of parallel spaced steel wires embedded within the rubber slab and extending continuously between the opposed side edges for most of the width of the rubber slab and a plurality of parallel spaced steel wires embedded within the rubber slab and extending continuously between the opposed end edges for most of the length of the rubber slab; and

a second rigidifying grid of reinforcing steel wire embedded within the rubber slab between the top face and the first rigidifying grid and consisting of a plurality of parallel spaced steel wires embedded within the rubber slab and extending continuously between the opposed side edges for most of the width of the rubber slab and a plurality of parallel spaced steel wires embedded within the rubber slab and extending continuously between the opposed end edges for most of the length of the rubber slab;

the diameter of the reinforcing steel wire of the first and second rigidifying grid being not smaller than number ten gauge wire in order to provide sufficient rigidity while retaining sufficient flexibility to conform to uneven terrain.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Original) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 1, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges and the wires extending between the opposed end edges are the same gauge of wire.

5. (Original) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 1, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges and the wires extending between the opposed end edges are the different gauges of wire.

6. (Original) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 1, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have the same relative spacing.

7. (Original) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 1, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have different relative spacing.

8. (Previously presented) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 1, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges have a number six gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have a number three gauge and a relative spacing of approximately three inches.

9. (Previously presented) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 1, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges have a number six gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have a number six gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches.

10. (Previously presented) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 1, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges have a number ten gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have a number ten gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches.

11. (New) A rubber access mat, comprising:

a flexible rubber slab having opposed side edges defining a width and opposed end edges defining a length; and

a rigidifying grid of reinforcing wire embedded within the rubber slab and consisting of a plurality of parallel spaced wires embedded within the rubber slab and extending between the opposed side edges for most of the width of the rubber slab and a plurality of parallel spaced wires embedded within the rubber slab and extending between the opposed end edges for most of the length of the rubber slab;

the diameter of the reinforcing wire being not smaller than the diameter of number ten gauge wire in order to provide sufficient rigidity while retaining sufficient flexibility to conform to uneven terrain.

12. (New) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 11, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges and the wires extending between the opposed end edges are the same gauge of wire.

13. (New) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 11, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges and the wires extending between the opposed end edges are different gauges of wire.

14. (New) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 11, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have the same relative spacing.

15. (New) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 11, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have different relative spacing.

16. (New) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 11, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges have a number six gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have a number three gauge and a relative spacing of approximately three inches.

17. (New) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 11, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges have a number six gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have a number six gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches.

18. (New) The rubber access mat as defined in Claim 11, wherein the wires extending between the opposed side edges have a number ten gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches and the wires extending between the opposed end edges have a number ten gauge and a relative spacing of approximately two inches.